Mc. Dowell J. N.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED

ON LAYING THE CORNER STONE

OF THE

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF KEMPER COLLEGE,

BY

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ADDRESS.

Long, we hope, will this day be remembered by the city of Saint Louis. And should our success equal our anticipations, long will the memory of those who have participated in the enterprise of laying the corner stone of the first edifice dedicated to medicine, be gratefully cherished in the bosoms of millions of mankind, who are to figure on the stage we now occupy.

We have placed but a pebble in the edifice of medicine which is to be reared at this spot. A view of what has transpired in the profession, and the history of the world, can but rivet conviction upon us that our destiny will be great, if we but employ the advantages which nature has given us, and which so urgently claim our attention. In the history of the human family there is nothing more remarkable than this prominent fact—that in the progress of civilization and the advancement of science and the arts, mankind have accomplished far more than had been anticipated; and the strides in improvement are not within the calculation of any one, but we have fallen far short, even in our most ardent fancy, of what in after time is demonstrated by facts that cannot be denied.

When we cast an eye in retrospect, we are astonished when we see mankind so ignorant of what was immediately in advance of them, of the discoveries which have effected such vast and important revolutions, not only in nations and empires, but which spread their power and influence to the remotest part of our globe, and have risen on the benighted world like the sun, to illumine even the greatest obscurity, and open up the day of Intelligence contrasted with our previous condition.

Let us look to a few facts in the history of our own particular branch of the human family, the old Scythian stock: Near

two thousand five hundred years have elapsed since our ancestors crossed from Asia, the Thracean Bosphorus, and penetrated the forests of Europe, and with a regular unceasing tread they have travelled onward, and swept over and inundated every nation and people which opposed a barrier to their progress.—They appear not to have been an ordinary wave of population, which has succeeded another, and lashed itself against the shore of destruction to die away and be gone forever, but like the swell of the ocean, the flood of people is ever pressed forward, until every nation beside is seen to flee to the mountains as a hiding place, a refuge from their power.

A critical examination of the languages and conditions of the people of Europe, and the ancestry of our own people, show most clearly that a part of the second great inundation of population in Europe has spread its power in this country, and the same people are now here and coming, who hold in their hands at this moment the destinies of the whole world. That wave of population is now with us, and while we but just see and feel the swell, the ocean billow is behind. The vast population which is coming from Europe, and from the eastern and northern portions of our continent, and pressing to the south and west, has but commenced to flow in upon us. Like the lightning and the wind in the storm, we, as pioneers, have been driven forward to hew out and prepare the way, while the heavy rain and flood of population is to follow. And in a view of the future we as little dream of what is to succeed, of the power and influence that is to congregate here and around us, as our fathers did when they stood on the banks of our mighty river, and supposed its giant waters would only be disturbed by the floating barge or the Indian canoe.

We live in an age that is peculiarly active in enterprise, and we are more likely to make improvements than the past, yet we are not prepared to believe this to be true, nor can we calculate what in our age is to be developed; but if we advance only in an equal ratio with the past, what will be our destiny in the next fifty years in point of population, and what must be our extent of improvements? We should be looking, as all nature indicates, steadily for change. The past justifies the conclusion that but just ahead is something which is to be developed, some new

discovery, some new change of policy, some new increase of power, that will give us additional force, increase our momentum, and mark our onward march with additional glory.

But a few years have elapsed since our fathers made their appearance in this beautiful valley, the richest, and by nature the most bountiful on the face of the globe. Then it was the abode of the prowling beast of the forest, and the wild and untutored Indian. What now do we see? The advance of science, the improvement of machinery, the increase of intelligence, and the spread of knowledge has congregated here its millions, and millions are yet to come and on the eve of coming, who have but as yesterday heard of our delightful abode, of our benign and wholesome laws, and our independence, our glorious liberty—yea, the liberty of conscience, the richest boon of Heaven. Here thousands are daily welcomed to the bosom of a country, the asylum of the oppressed, and in a land, where the face of the whole people frowns with indignation on the oppressor. The day is coming when millions on millions will congregate in this our mighty valley, and concentrate their influence on this our infant city. That this vast and yet sparsely populated country is to be the great bread-growing portion for our continent, there can not be a doubt, and as the soil is cultivated and commerce increases, so will cities rise, and when the land ceases to be productive, they must decline. Asia was the birth-place, most unquestionably, of the Caucassian varieties of the human family, the stock from which we came, and that portion of the continent in which they commenced their career, now, although abandoned, gives the strongest manifestations of the facts just asserted. There are now the mouldering ruins of stupendous cities, which were once the abode of millions in Asia, and which once stood encircled by a rich and finely cultivated soil, but as time and cultivation destroyed its fertility, the people emigrated, until naught is seen but the sandy waste, encircling the deserted city, whose splendid columns lie scattered and broken, the abode now only of the lonely night-bird or beast of prey. Had the soil remained, the descendants of the people who reared those splendid structures would now be there.

But these are facts which should encourage us, and cheer us onward. We have a soil whose depth and fertility, with proper

culture, can never perish; and the vast population which is here to assemble will here remain to the remotest generations. These are facts which should rouse us to deeds of renown which will make our memory imperishable, and every energy should be employed to transmit to posterity, as the tide increases, that which will impart the greatest blessing to mankind.

We owe our efforts to the future, for what the past has conferred on us; and as we travel on, following in the history of our race, wherever these great duties have not been performed, man, by degrees, has become degraded.

Referring back to our history as a people, as the wave of population rolled on in Europe, and its tide of power rose, carrying on its bosom the wreck of nations and of empires, and their literature and science, the benighted mass was penetrated with the rays of intelligence which shot from the nations which their rude power had crushed, and for a time, extinguished. And in the dawn of learning and intelligence we behold institutions rising, as the glorious sun on the agitated ocean, which has been preceded by the night of darkness and despair.

When the literature of the Greek and the Roman was buried by the avalanche of our Gothic and German ancestors—the old Scythian family—the leaven of science which was then introduced was the reformation of the world. Silently, for more than a thousand years, it was at work before its power was strongly manifested. But, as age after age rolled on, each improving the other, and the last the most cultivated, a few bright spots were seen shining with greater splendor, and thither the more intelligent congregated to enjoy the light of science; a few clear fountains of knowledge burst forth, and those who thirsted came to drink and be inspired.

Thus the efforts for the spread of knowledge increased, until modern Europe is animated at every point with institutions, the ornaments of the age, and the pride and boast of their people. The amelioration of the condition, the advancement and happiness of mankind, appears to have been the end and aim of those who embarked in the cause of science; and in an equal ratio with the advance of intelligence has been the elevation of the human family. Our own country, contrasted with the rest of mankind, in point of intelligence, is the most striking monu-

ment of the fact. Literature, science and the arts, and the efforts for the elevation of the condition of man, have ever gone hand in hand. But as mankind advanced in the discoveries in physical science, the science of medicine, or its collateral sciences, seems to have been the harbinger in the great work. This fact was most prominent in our early history, during the tenth, the eleventh and twelfth centuries; especially after the destruction, in the East, of the Asiatic or the Saracenic school of medicine, in the twelfth century, there was a period of almost total darkness, during which the whole world lay involved in the deepest gloom, ignorance and superstition—a period in which there was scarce an object to attract the lover of science, and scarce a fact can be recorded but those of violence and blood, and all the departments of learning shared a fate which is too degrading to relate, while the bright and green spots in the waste were shrouded with a pall. But the struggle of light and darkness that had so long been contested ceased, and the day dawned upon the world, which is destined to increase in brightness until we are perfected in knowledge, or man has approximated, as near as his nature will allow, the wisdom of his Maker. The dawn of science, however, was with the developement of the science of medicine, and its collateral sciences.

At Padua and Salernum, in Italy, and Leyden, in Germany, in the early poriod of European medicine, science among our ancestors appears to have had its first great impulse, and some of the brightest luminaries of the profession have risen; and as we travel onward, we find that Scotland, England, Ireland, France, and our own country, have been its most successful cultivators.—But wherever for the time, medicine has flourished, there we have ever had clustering some of the richest gems of literature and the arts. But, wherever medicine has been most successfully cultivated, where great institutions have risen, it has ever been by the energy of those who are engaged in the cultivation of science, and whenever that lofty genius which has towered over the rest has disappeared, whenever that energy which has characterized every grand improvement, every great achievement among men has been lost, the seat of science has been transferred. Some point more auspicious for talent, whose

views are broader and more comprehensive, more elevated, and better adapted to the genius and necessities of the profession, or which has manifested more industry, or greater facilities, have been most successful in the race. And no nation or people has ever been successful in building great institutions of learning, who have not with energy encouraged the talent, the native talent of their country, and whose vigor in the prosecution of the work has not been equal to the power and intellect they would employ;

> For the sluggard's brow the laurel never grows,
> Renown is not the child of indolent repose.

So soon as America was sufficiently colonized to justify the project of a school of medicine, that would educate our sons without a tour to Europe, the lamp of medical science was trimmed in our city of brotherly love, and some of the brightest lights have arisen that have adorned the annals of the human race—lights that have not only illuminated their own country, but have shed their effulgence on the world. The names of Rush, Shippen, Barton and Wister, are written on the brightest scroll of medicine, and succeeding them, the same immortality will hallo those of Jackson, Chapman, McLelland and others, who are still active and on the stage. And as the tide of nations rolled on, and the billow broke over our mountains, and descended into our valley, soon we see an institution planted in the wilderness. It was thought then by some premature, but its success has been unparalleled, and its growth vigorous and onward, and some of the brightest ornaments of medicine hvea risen and adorned, and still shed lustre on her halls.

It is the genius and energy of the people and the teachers of the place, which is consecrated and dedicated to the profession; and, when that spirit departs, the sceptre is forever transferred.

The halls that were once filled are deserted, and the place that once echoed with the eloquence of the teacher, is the abode of the owl and the bat; the same climate may exist, the same sun may shine, and all nature stand as of old, yet the spirit that has brought forth such prodigies has departed, and the sun of their glory has set forever, the bright spots of their former existence are sullied by the ignominy of their descendants.

When the great Boerhave departed, and his associates were

scattered, the enthusiasm in the cultivation of medical science departed also, and the school of Leyden, which was the centre of medical education for the whole world, dwindled into nothing. The halls of Leyden now echo with emptiness. Again the light broke forth, and Scotland, rising triumphant, assumed the control. No man could be well educated in medicine who had not visited Edinburgh. But when the great *Cullen* and the *elder Monroe* left the stage, and were succeeded by those who were less talented and enterprising, less vigor of intellect manifested by the teachers, and less encouragement from the people, the sceptre departed from the hand of the *Scot*.

So it has been alternately with England and Ireland, when a Cheselden, a Hunter, a Cooper, a Bell, a Laurence and an Abernathy lectured, and the ardor and enthusiasm of medicine was there, and great minds were employed and respected, England was not inferior in the race. And Dublin was ever crowded when Collis was vigorous, and on the stage.

Again, we look forth, and in our own time the light which France has kindled illumines the world, and congregating thousands crowd to Paris, now the seat of medical learning for the whole earth. Why is this? Because she has caught the fire of enthusiasm as it burned on the *altar*, and kindled it in the hearts of her people, and the Frenchman's bosom, in the cultivation of medical science, glows with a living flame. Here, within a few years, have arisen many, very many, of the rarest and most gifted geniuses of the age, whose ardor in science has imparted even youthful vigor to old age, and whose fire of ambition has only been chilled by the damps of the grave. Whose heart that has felt the first throb for glorious distinction, does not warm in his bosom at the very name of Cuivier, of Bishat, Brousais, Louis, Andrall, and a hundred others, whose fame is co-extensive with the civilized world, and around whose names will linger a halo that can never die.

This it is that has given France her superiority, and this it is that will give any institution superiority, no matter where located, whether on the mountain's top or in the vale, whether in the cities of Europe, or in the East, or in this our wilderness of the West. It is the superior genius and energy of mind which has effected anything—the determination and perseverance of a peo-

ple who have said they will succeed though millions should oppose. In war, as well as in the walks of science, this has ever been the power that has acted—the machine that has moved.—A single example will suffice: While Athens, Sparta, and their sister republics rose in splendor, and their military prowess spread terror over the earth, who was it that dreamed of the mighty achievements of little Macedon? Yet Macedon conquered the whole world; a Philip and an Alexander came, both alike the personification of energy and action itself. And though unequal in numbers, ever superior in the strife, although surrounded by millions, victory ever perched upon their banner. We can make no calculations for the effective operations of mind, nor set bounds to its achievments. It is that spirit which sits upon the world with a *magic spell;* it is the electricity which guides and directs the tempest—wheels and steers the storms of mankind, prostrating all that opposes, and crushing to the dust every thing which offers resistance. When mind of activity is employed, the world will soon perceive it by its effects, for while some are waiting for the period of prematurity to pass, *mind acts*, and presses onward with an assurance of success. What must have been the consciousness of superiority which swelled the bosom of the heroic Alexander, when he *swam* the Granicus at the head of his victorious army, and made Persia's millions bow to his majesty.

But we should ever be mindful, that whatever has been achieved has not been by genius alone; unaided, unfostered, it is like to die with the blight and mildew of neglect, the most promising buds are too often blighted by the cold and unrelenting winter of disappointment. It is not so much the men or the institutions which act in their elevation, as the genius and energy which gives birth to them. Great men in every age and nation have risen in times of turbulence and passion, and are carried upward and onward by the whirlwind, that would have fallen without a trait of character worthy of notice, without a deed worthy to be recorded, had not the force of circumstances made them what they were. A people who are debased and corrupted, will generate by their own feelings and passions men of like mould, and those who are devoloped among them, and those who assume the control among them, wear the image of

those who put them in power, the impress of the age that gave them birth.

The Augustine age of Rome gave birth to men great in eloquence and learning, while a Nero and a Caligula were but the emblems of a people sunk in the abyss of degradation, so low that their own passions, propensities and follies, brought upon them the curses which they so richly deserved. Thrown into existence at a period when the whole world was in motion, and France was reeling with fanatical intoxication, drunkenness and debauchery, Bonaparte became her master, and spread his power over Europe, a power which never could have been achieved had not the circumstances demanded. Napolean by nature was constituted for the great general, but he could not have been the leader of the veterans of our revolution, nor could he have acted as the chief magistrate of our people. It was vice, anarchy, infuriated passion and misrule, which made Bonaparte the Emperor, while predominant virtue and an honest love of liberty, developed the character of our immortal Washington. Had Napoleon lived in America, he would have been despised for his tyranny; while George Washington, if in France, would have been the victim of his virtue, and would have fallen by the bloody guillotine a martyr on the altar of liberty, and been buried in the ruins of his country. And as it is with civil governments, so has it ever been with institutions of learning: it is the people that must give tone—they must sustain and encourage institutions of learning, or they perish as the plant in the arid soil.

In the history of the world, every nation, every people and city, have their records, and it is natural for us to dwell with rapture and delight on the departed glory of men, and feel a deep regret for those who have been led by blinded passion to ruin and degradation. Even the earth itself has its records. The antiquarian in his researches, finds on the mountain's top the *fossil*, which tells that once the ocean was there, and revolution has changed its position, and he determines the changes that have been, and marks the periods of their durations. He digs up and brings to light cities which have been buried, and determines their advance in science, the cultivation of the people, and by their sculptured columns, their splendid sta-

tuary and paintings, their works of art, what was their former grandeur and greatness. The historian records the deeds of vice and virtue of successive ages, and we view them as monuments either of their glory or disgrace. But the mouldering columns and the ruined architecture of the Old World, only show the alternate elevation or depression of the races. At one time Attica produced the accomplished orator, the profound philosopher, or the lovely poet; but it was the taste and genius of the age which gave them birth. Again, we behold Attica the abode of the man of ignorance and passion; and in vain do we seek, in lovely Attica, for the eloquence of a Demosthenes, or the philosophy of a Plato, or the dulcet strains of the harp of Homer. The spirit which developed the mighty powers of Greece has departed—no longer are her delightful groves the abode of literature and science—no longer her clear fountains sparkle with the waters of inspiration; but she is the abode of the sullen, unlettered Musselman. Should not such records, such recollections, rouse us to deeds of honor. Some future inquirer may ask for our history—perhaps disinter our ruins—and open up, for aught we know, our city, which has been buried by one of nature's dire catastrophes. What then will we manifest in our history?—what splendid temple dedicated to science would manifest our former patronage of learning? where would be the deeds recorded of those who would live renowed in story? where the bright scroll that would transmit to future generations the mind of St. Louis that is to live immortal?

Here we have privileges, which, if cultivated, would make us rich in all that is great, and equal in magnificence all that the world hitherto could boast. If, instead of devoting ourselves so much to the enjoyment of ostentation and the gratification of appetite, our efforts be directed to incline the rising generation to the cultivation of mind and the improvement of morals, our country would not only shine in the future history of mankind, but we would contribute largely to the great end of human existence, and add, with a bounteous hand, to human happiness.

Our country is filling up as with the swell of the deep, and demands it of us, and if we do not exert all our energies, and summon every collateral circumstance to our aid, the mass of uneducated mind which is flowing upon us will obscure that

which has alrerdy been achieved, and greatly retard our future progress.

We hold the man as a traitor to his country, and recreant to the high trust transmitted to him, and sealed by the blood of his fathers, who would refuse to extend a fostering hand to any and every effort that has for its aim the education of any part or portion of our country. And, in founding a school of medicine in our city, we feel assured we shall be sustained by the good wishes of our people, and, as far as our country's circumstances will allow, receive their earnest encouragement. Why should we not have a school of medicine in St. Louis? It will not only bring to our city large sums of money, and enhance greatly our interest, in a pecuiary point of view, but it will add to our common stock of knowledge, warm up and excite our citizens, and give an impulse to learning in all its departments. This surely cannot be a prejudice, but an advantage that could not otherwise be obtained.

The facilities of access to St. Louis are equal, if not superior, to any inland city on the globe; and for a school of medicine and surgery, no point on the continent is superior. Here we combine the regions of the dreary North with the sunny South, with all their varied ills, for the examination of the pupil. We are in the centre of the mass of population of the great South-west, and those who wish to be educated *well* can as readily obtain their learning here as elsewhere. Shall we decline the contest and leave the palm to other cities, and own our inferiority. This may suit the spirits of other climes, but it is not the spirit of those who have embarked in the enterprise—it is not the spirit of the sons of the Mississippi valley. When that energy which has brought forth the schools in the eastern portion of our valley has ceased to operate, if we but have an equal amount of talent, they cannot contend against so many important advantages which St. Louis has by nature.

Besides, the history of medical schools is but the history of change in this country. The history of every grand achievment is but the history of mind that has been fostered by a people who gloried in being great, and whose aim was the good of the human family. It is said by some, however, to be premature; but if it be premature to build up a school of medicine

here, then it is equally so that we should have made this our home, and premature that we should educate our children at all. There may be some difficulty, some toil in the achievment, but we should remember that the greenest laurel grows on the mountain's brow, and should St. Louis come forth with energy in the work, she will wear the emblem of greatness in proportion to her toil. She will rear here monuments of glory, which will stand on the banks of our river, if not in massive piles, to conflict with the elements—she will be remembered as the mother of sons, whose renown has covered the earth, and will last when the pyramids of Egypt shall have been swept from their basis by time, and the triumphant statue shall have mouldered into ruins. What change of policy or revolutions in nations could have affected the names of Hippocrites, Galen, and Celsus, of the Ancients? Nothing. Still they are admired for their towering genius, and the people that gave them birth for the fostering hand that developed them. They have floated down to us, on the wrecks of nations and empires, as a casket of precious jewels, whose brilliancy could never be effaced, and time could not corrode. What revolution can destroy the transcendant distinction of Cuivier and Bishat? France in all her glory may be swept from the face of the earth, her language be destroyed, and her records perish, still these great names will live standing on a mountain, amid the nations, and their lustre increase with the increase of years, as long as man is civilized, or the earth is inhabited.

Shall our rich and almost boundless territory go unexplored, except by men from distant lands, or shall we educate our sons for the task? Shall our beautiful prairies waste their sweets in a desert air, or forever go untrodden by our educated children? Shall our mineral resources, the richest on the globe, go unexplored, and left to sleep on in silence, undisturbed by the energies of our people? There are just around us, as all nature and experience testifies, truths of vast importance which remain undiscovered, truths which have never risen on the horizon of the human understanding; there are regions of truth, through which no path as yet has lead, bright spots which have not been perceived by the eagle eye of science; truths of greater magnitude than those with which we are familiar, and will hand

down the names of those who discovered them to the nations, written in the brightest and most enduring characters. These were the opinions of Newton and La Place, who have unfolded so much that was hidden, and reflected so much honor on human nature. Let us then encourage our sons, and as their tastes or inclination leads them, lend them our fostering care.—Let us bid them go search here in all the wildness of Nature's meadows, with their shrubs and flowers, and test by knowledge, the fruits of their researches. Already the glorious work has begun in the academy of natural sciences, by the energy of some of our physicians, and it will be prosecuted. Let us search faithfully and with care—perhaps some plant may grow, some balsam trickle, some gum exude, unheeded in the solitude, which will afford relief to maladies, as yet beyond the reach of the profession. Go test the millions of springs on the mountain side and on the plain; on the meandering borders of our endless rivers; perhaps some rivulet or stream, in silence since the world began, has wasted on the unconscious earth its precious waters, the preserver of health, and the catholicon of life, which would prolong our existence, and which was so ardently sought for by the early cultivators of science. Let us bid them go search in our mountains for treasures which have slept in secret since the morn of creation, perhaps some mineral may be discovered, some medicine be employed, that will stay the unsparing hand of the plague and the pestilence, and pour the balm of health in the hectic bosom.

Who would be the sluggard? and who would not embark on an enterprise, from which so little is to be feared and so much is to be gained? those who shrink from the undertaking will linger on the shore with regret, while those who have ventured will reap a reward that will last as long as time; and ever-blooming flowers will be strewed upon their graves, as long as our beautiful soil yields its support to the gathering nations that will crowd upon it, or our mighty river rolls its waters to the ocean. Here we will leave monuments to signalize us as a people, and place Saint Louis high on the scroll of fame; and when the steamers of the ocean shall crowd our wharves, and our infant city swell to be the London of America, and millions of human beings will stand where we do now, they will admire

and applaud our efforts in the wilderness. The roses which we have planted in the bosom of the wilderness will bud afresh in every future generation. The balm which takes root here will be gathered by every age to heal the nations that follow us, and St. Louis will be the Gilead of our beautiful valley.

But to advance the great interest of any people or institution, however, there should be a steady, persevering co-operation in the work; and while a great work is in suspense, each man should be found at his post, applying himself to his duty. The professor should assiduously labor in his department, and the people should give that support which will soothe him in his toil. And although the whole world beside should frown, and rival institutions raise a tempest which will terrify, stlll the ship, will be staid amid the storms which agitate the ocean of mankind around us. But should we embark as if we anticipated no danger, as on a pleasure voyage, on an unruffled summer sea, and expect to quit the ship and make the shore when the first groan of distant thunder was heard, or the old sailor foretold the storm, and allow fright and consternation to sit on every countenance, *all will be lost.* And when the storm is on us, should each man, deserting his rope, fly to another, and while the wind is splitting our sails, and sweeping overboard our masts, and no order, no system, no command prevails, and every one is deserting to fly to another part of the vessel—the helmsman quits his station to go aloft, or the old tar who throws the lead claims a higher privilege, and all is confusion and dismay, *we are lost, and lost forever.* We will be but sport for the tossing billow, and food for the hungry sharks, that prowl around us to feed upon our mangled carcasses.

Our motto must be—peace, and to our posts. People, Trustees and Professors, each to your respective duties, and the wind of persecution may howl a hurricane, and the lightning of malice may fall upon us, but if our good ship be tight and free, our gallant mast may be bent but not broken. And like the proud eagle soaring aloft, she will ride the billow to its top of foam and glory, in the strength that overcomes the storm.